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ABSTRACT

This document reports on a 5-year project developed by the Department of Education of the U.S. Virgin Islands to create a useful information and technical assistance system for professional personnel to bring about educational change and growth. The project was based on the original Interstate Project in Dissemination model (with the exception that the territory consisted only of two school districts) and depended upon the development of (1) linking, (2) management, and (3) resources. Of these three components, linking proved to be the key to successful dissemination. Contents of the report include sections on the following topics: methods of procedures; impact; client responsiveness and satisfaction; significant learnings; outside agencies; the project's first year of institutionalization (1982-83); equity; summary of results to date; before and after National Institute of Education funding; and an evaluation of the 5-year project by Sam D. Sieber titled "Getting It Together." The main document contains six tables. Sieber's evaluation, which occupies the last half of the document, contains 16 tables. An appendix includes client and nonclient questionnaires. (IW)

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VIRGIN ISLANDS EDUCATIONAL DISSEMINATION SYSTEM

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GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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EA 018 213

FINAL REPORT

Office of Federal Programs,
Dissemination and Special Project Activities

Department of Education
Post Office Box 6640
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

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NIE Grant Number: NIE-G-78-0016

Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
P.O. Box 6640, Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, V.I. 00801

November 7, 1985

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Ms. Lois E. Vaughan
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Management Division
U.S. Department of Education (NIE)
1200-19th Street, N.W.
Room 822
Washington, D.C. 20208

RE: VIEDS #NIE-G-78-0016

Dear Ms. Vaughan:

The purpose of this letter is to transmit (12) twelve copies of the Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System's Final Report, NIE-G-78-0016.

On behalf of the educational community and the people of the Virgin Islands, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the National Institute of Education and its fine staff for the assistance and cooperation it has given us over the years.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Turnbull

Charles W. Turnbull, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

CWT/JMO/gg

Final Report

Project Number 7-0224
Grant Number NIE-G 78-0016

Virgin Islands Department of Education
V.I. Dissemination System
P. O. Box 6640
St. Thomas, V.I. 00801

Charles W. Turnbull, Ph.D., Commissioner

November 7, 1985

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education. Contractors/Grantees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgement in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official National Institute of Education position or policy.

Final Report

Project Number 7-0224
Grant Number NIE-G 78-0016

V.I. DISSEMINATION CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

Office of Federal Programs
and Dissemination System

Prepared by:

Mr. James M. Oliver, Director, Federal Programs
(with assistance of Beverly Nieves,
Patricia Murphy and Sam Sieber)

Final Report

Capacity Building Dissemination Project

Virgin Islands Department of Education
P. O. Box 6640
St. Thomas, V.I. 00801

Project Number 7-0224

Grant Number: NIE-G 78-0016

Period: April 1, 1978 to September 30, 1983

Date of Submission : November 7, 1985

Name of Agency: V.I. Department of Education

Title of Project: V.I. Educational Dissemination System Project

Project Director: James M. Oliver
Assisted by Beverly Nieves, Patricia Murphy and Sam Sieber

NIE Project Officer: Arch K. Steiner, Ph.D.

Abstract

The Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System (VIEDS) was designed to improve education in the territory by providing information and technical assistance to professional personnel in order to bring about positive changes and growth. Other persons who have legitimate interest in the educational community are also served.

The project is based on the original Interstate Project in Dissemination (IPOD) model with the exception that the territory is small and consists only of two school districts. The usual state education structure becomes easier to manage since VIEDS' smallness is the key to its success.

Management: The project is managed by the Virgin Islands Department of Education's Office of Federal Programs. This means part-time management, but it is effective since managerial requirements are small. The expertise of the Director of Federal Programs is brought to bear on all fiscal and reporting requirements. There is also direct linear contact with the Commissioner of Education's office, since the project falls under that agency.

Linkage: This is highly successful in the territory because the linkers may visit all of the schools several times a semester and make direct one to one contact with clients. The building of credibility is an essential ingredient since word spreads and more clients seek out the linker for service.

Resources: Because of its smallness, the project uses a double base: one in the states, the San Mateo Educational Resource Center (SMERC) for in-depth, longer range searches and its own local data base for immediate information responses. It becomes necessary to be tied to a large exterior information source since it would be impossible to create a large computerized data base on its own.

VIEDS developed over a five year period in partnership with the National Institute of Education (NIE) starting in 1978. By 1983, VIEDS was fully institutionalized and using its own funds to operate the project which is still growing. It is achieving its goals of creating change for growth through its services. There are measurable changes in the local school system as verified by our consultant and evaluator, Dr. Sam Sieber, See "Getting It Together."

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Introduction

In 1977, the Department of Education of the U.S. Virgin Islands applied to the National Institute of Education for a Capacity Building Dissemination grant. This was awarded and thus began a liaison with several agencies that was to help develop a useful, usable information system that would have a very positive impact on education in the Territory. Such an effect is difficult to evalute in the short term, since the complete ripple effect from the first information "pebble" takes a long time in being perceived and understood. The accumulation of ripples over a period of time would further complicate the perception. Be that as it may, the various evaluations that we have done along the way have given us very positive glimpses into the successful functioning of the National Institute of Education Dissemination System.

It is our experience that an information service following the Interstate Project on Dissemination (IPOD) model is only as good as its linker. A good linker can perform "miracles" even with a limited data base and or part-time management. A linker should be an experienced educator who has developed the necessary sensing mechanisms to diagnose problems from a mass of amorphous compliants. In other words, what might appear to be a casual conversation between a linker and a client is in reality a structured session from which flows problem identification and appropriate linkage with data and or other usable resources which can be brought to bear to help the client. These should include not only personal delivery and explanation of the information, but professional follow-up as well. To us it has become apparent that of the three major units in an educational dissemination system, linking, management and resources, effective linkage is the key to success. Otherwise it would be a passive information service which a trained librarian could administer.

The Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System is an actual example of a functioning dissemination model. Even with a relatively weak local data base, physically small size, isolation, part-time management and limited financial resources, our project functions well because of highly professional and dedicated linkers who understand their role and have at their disposal both national data bases and a self-developed one. These concepts will be more clearly understood as the reader gets further into this document where they are explored more thoroughly. This type of "hands-on" one to one linking operates very well in our small community which has only two school districts and things are close to one another.

If any general conclusions may be drawn from the Virgin Islands experience it is that to be successful in dissemination a school district must have a minimum of one good linker and supportive staff, which ideally would include an excellent secretary and a retrieval specialist other than management of course. There needs to be a locally developed data base for limited immediate information response, but the system also requires access to at least one fully-developed national data base for more rounded information responses. Of course, like all conclusions, ours will be limited to school districts and not state oriented dissemination programs, since the distances between schools and or districts can sometimes be enormous such as exist in some of our western states. Nevertheless, it is our contention, based on our experience, that the National Institution of Education's Dissemination Capacity Building Program has brought to the Virgin Islands the benefits that were visualized by the early resourchers in educational dissemination. Our system provides the latest scientific or practical information to the professional educator or other interested person for the improvement of education in the territory. Seen from another point

of view, Virgin Islands Education Dissemination System is a formal, structured organization providing informal teacher training on a one to one basis to professionals who are receptive to such a situation or who have become receptive through contact with the linker or other aspects of our project. Thus we can see clearly the results of one of the ripple effects that we referred to earlier.

We feel that the National Institute of Education's funds have been well spent resulting in very positive and observable changes in education in the territory. We would venture to suggest as well, that our experience could serve as the bases for a model for other small communities to follow if they wished to reap the benefits of an educational dissemination system.

A. Methods of Procedures

When the Virgin Islands Department of Education first discovered the concept of educational dissemination in 1976 the IPOD group had completed its study and published its report. A number of Capacity Building Grants had been awarded by NIE and interest was building in other states to acquire funding for these purposes. It was then that the department decided to submit an application which was funded as of April 1978.

Management: It was difficult for the department to find a suitable director in the territory and it was decided after long and fruitful negotiation with NIE to permit VIEDS to hire a highly qualified professor of educational research from our local college to be its first and part time director. Unfortunately, the director left in less than one year and VIEDS had to find new management. One must understand that a small population such as ours cannot provide all of the specialized talent we require. The decision was made to place VIEDS under the Office of Federal Programs of the Virgin Islands Department of Education. This, of course, continued our part time management design since the director of Federal Programs is a talented individual who can wear many hats and whose special emphasis on fiscal and reportorial aspects of the project kept us in compliance with NIE's technical requirements. The director has almost daily direct contact with the Commissioner of Education and is therefore a facilitator as far as VIEDS is concerned for top level support. This is extremely important for the growth of the project because the Commissioner is personally informed on a regular basis of VIEDS activities and successes. It is thus that our manager epitomizes what all managers should be and that is a facilitator who permits, guides and encour-

ages his professional staff to achieve project goals and in this case brings about positive changes in the education system.

Linkage: In the beginning VIEDS hired two highly professional linkers, one for each of the two school districts. Support staff was also hired for each district and VIEDS was off and running. The methodology employed by the linkers varied, but each approach was highly professional with appropriate positive results.

The St. Thomas/St. John District: Here the linker built her clientele on a one to one bases building credibility as she went. First the linker attended as many administrative and faculty meetings as she could, always requesting time to make awareness presentations at those meetings. This would be followed up by direct personal contact with principals at which time the linker requested permission to visit the school. The first clients appeared in teachers' lounges. The informal nature of these contacts set the tone for future visits, since the linker was seen as a friend and colleague and not as a representative of the administration or a threat to the teacher who dared expose her professional weaknesses by requesting help. The assistance in the form of information packages and other technical aid became sought after once certain members of the faculty became aware that a free professional improvement service was available. Visits to schools became more regular as calendar programs were scheduled and the pending visits were announced in advance. The school library became another meeting place for linker and client. The linker also walked the halls and approached teachers who were in their rooms but without students present. Over the years the faculties of most of the schools have learned to use the service and much beneficial activity has resulted. The linker also directs her attention to non-teaching persons: school administrators, legislators, social workers, police, health

personnel and community groups all of whom have legitimate need for information in liaisons with education.

The St. Croix District: The linker here has proven that different approaches can also be fruitful. Her approach was office oriented rather than field oriented. She did more work for administrators and used the telephone and librarians as sources for client requests. There was adequate response but the missing ingredient was the direct contact with the classroom teacher and other clients.

VIEDS' experience in linking indicates several steps for success:

1. Awareness presentations
2. Creating readiness in prospective clients
3. Actively seeking clients
4. The interview
5. The use of professionally developed sensing mechanisms for determining the actual nature of the client's need
6. Supplying assistance through the resource base (information, technical assistance, resource persons, networking, etc.)
7. Personal delivery of the aid package including mention of the nature of the aid and how it might be used
8. Follow up and evaluation

It is clear to VIEDS that linking is the primary component in a dissemination project and that even with the best resource and management a project will fail without effective professional linkage.

Resources: VIEDS' first director, because of his background in educational research, was able to establish our need for an off island data base and again, after long negotiation with NIE we were permitted to contact for services from SMERC. This proved to be a successful if somewhat

distant relationship. It took about two weeks for a search to arrive after the initial request, although that has varied over the years taking sometimes as long as four weeks.

It was also understood that VIEDS would commence developing its own information base. This was done and over the years a small but very useful local resource has been developing which permits the linker to supply the client with an immediate response. It is our contention that because of our size it would be extremely costly and if not impossible to have a complete data base of our own. We feel now after all of our experience that our approach works best for us and could be a model for small, isolated communities. We are, however, looking forward to the time when we will have the technical ability and sufficient funds to introduce computer terminals in our system in order to have direct access to the nations data bases.

VIEDS has approached establishing its dissemination project as its needs dictated. Our use of part time management, varied approaches to linking and our dual resource bases are reflections of special problems and our attempt to respond to these. Our methods might be considered somewhat unorthodox but our successful evaluations indicate we are working in the right direction. Our major goal is to bring about positive changes and growth in Virgin Islands education. We are achieving that goal.

B. Impact

The dissemination project has had a variety of impacts on a large segment of the educational system.

Awareness, enlightenment. This function of dissemination systems has been cited by researchers as highly important, especially in isolated communities. Indeed, it has been considered an essential prerequisite to more active uses of information. The extent to which awareness building has occurred in the Virgin Islands is indicated by responses to one of the questions in our periodic evaluation surveys: "Please indicate the response below that most accurately describes the degree to which you have actually been able to use the information or materials that you received." After the first year of the project, 65 per cent of the clients indicated the response "the information helped me to keep aware of developments and activities in education," and in the fifth year 57 per cent gave the same response. The written response of an elementary school principal illustrates the impact of VIEDS in this respect:

> Your research provided me with a wealth of research and literature and saved me hundreds of hours of work. My energy and time can now be put into the more practical aspects of my work.

And an evaluation specialist in the Department underscored the problem of isolation:

> SMERC is a wonder, particularly since I always seem to want such obscure information. I've found that the available resources in the Virgin Islands are limited to general topics and are frequently not very useful for the types of information I need. Thanks again!

Individual problem-solving. Many clients, of course, went beyond the stage of enlightenment and sought to solve some problem in their work. Several responses to our latest survey reflect this function:

	%
Have been able to use the information to make minor improvement in a programs or practice	34%
The information helped me to conduct research or evaluation	30%
Have been able to use the information to actually initiate a new program or practice	12%
Have been able to use the information to make major improvements in a program or practice	6%
	(135)

Some typical responses follow:

> I made changes in the reward system of a behavior modification program that already exists. The information was shared with teachers interested in beginning a program of their own.
>
> We changed the scheduling of classes for the lunch program. This enabled us to have a smoother running program with more time for the students to eat.
>
> Used the information, gotten from the articles, to try and help a 6 year old child deal with his first experience where someone close to him had died.

Capacity building. Another common form of impact entailed the use of information to develop plans and proposals for educational change. Here are some relevant statistics:

	%
Have been able to use the information to develop a plan to improve existing programs or practices	38%
Have been able to use the information to modify or alter an existing plan for improving programs or practices	30%
Have been able to use the information to write a position paper or other paper that could be used in practice in the future	27%
	(135)

Use of the information system by top level staff and other policy makers suggests that most of these planning activities will come to fruition. Even the legislature was a frequent user in this respect. At a presentation to the Senate Education Committee, for example, the linker was asked to supply information on how students could be put to work in school as a means of coping with destructive attitudes. The majority of the Senators planned to appropriate funds for such a project.

A major undertaking by the Department of Education was planning for curriculum centers, and VIEDS was requested to conduct searches. The results were circulated and, largely on the basis of these searches, plans were drawn up for the future. In this case the linker herself was a member of the planning group. Another exemplary capacity build up effort was a needs assessment conducted by VIEDS during the first year of its existence. This report was studied carefully by the Superintendent and his staff in developing

plans for the system as a whole.

Proposal writing was also a major reason for using VIEDS. Indeed, the VIEDS project director was personally involved in helping the department prepare several proposals. In one case, after a great deal of interaction with the NDN coordinator and the administrative staff of a junior high school, an Alternative Education Program application was developed and submitted requesting $750,000 for LEA funding over a three year period. The proposal was eventually approved and the program was implemented.

Examples of capacity building efforts that were supported significantly by VIEDS are too many to mention, but one further case deserves notice. VIEDS was very active in supplying the latest research in bilingual studies, bilingual teaching techniques and educational models for the St. Croix community in its preparation of a proposal for training centers. In fact, the linker on that island played a leadership role in preparing such plans in cooperation with other staff.

A special type of capacity building concerns the dissemination and utilization of knowledge, and here again VIEDS took several significant steps. In the first place, whenever the VIEDS staff played a leading role in developing plans in each case use of external information was institutionalized in the planning and implementation process.

For example, because our St. Croix linker served on the planning committee for the curriculum center, dissemination activities became an integral part of the new center. In addition, schools and offices have been helped to develop their own collections of microfiche and other educational documents. Thus, the head of the math department at one junior high school has collected approximately fifty titles in math and computer education in his office. These are available along with microfiche readers and computers for all math teachers at this school. Further, depositories of microfiche on specialized areas in bilingual education have been set up by the foreign language supervisor, the bilingual psychologist at the diagnostic center, and the coordinator of the Caribbean Bilingual Education Center. In addition, VIEDS has been able to copy and store information in its own offices. At present we hold over 7,000 documents, which has made it possible to provide in-house information in twenty-four hours or less. (In the past year, in-house searches increased 300%. A special section of our latest evaluation report compared in-house and SMERC searches, and found that the only difference was in the greater satisfaction with the turnaround time for in-house searches.) Finally, it should be noted that several librarians have started microfiche files based on VIEDS' searches. All such files, incidentally, include an increasing number of local resources that have been placed on microfiche by

SMERC, including the Virgin Islands Career Education State Plan, the Unified Mathematics Curriculum for the Virgin Islands K-12, Summer School in the Virgin Islands -- A Needs Assessment, and papers regarding the Virgin Islands from the 7th Annual Caribbean Studies Association Conference. In addition, VIEDS has collected and mimeographed locally written materials (by teachers and their classes) such as plays and poems on local holidays and favorite heroes.

In-service education. Another important arena of impact has been in-service education. Thus, VIEDS identified a need to improve school scheduling on the secondary level and referred the problem to the district superintendent, who authorized the linker to develop workshops and coordinate future planning. The linker contacted the Appalachia Educational Lab and asked them to design workshops to fit our needs. In the fall of 1981 VIEDS offered these workshops in conjunction with staff from AEL. They were well attended by administrators, registrars, and guidance counsellors, and several schools began experimenting with computerized scheduling in 1982. Principals and teachers began talking about other uses for computers in the schools, and more staff training was planned. As a result of these activities, more than 50 computers were made available in the public schools and computerized scheduling will soon become routine.

The linker in St. Croix has conducted a workshop on bilingual education and has taught a graduate summer course at the College of the Virgin Islands for staff members concerned with bilingual education. She has also acted as

liaison between World University in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands Department of Education in developing a program for sensitizing adminsitrators to the problems and scope of bilingual education in a multicultural society. Her in-service activities in this field have been invaluable.

Many other examples of support or leadership for in-service programs could be cited, since the linkers make special efforts to address the participants on the value of external information and regularly offer their services to the workshop leaders during the planning stage. And it is worth noting that 23 per cent of VIEDS clients in the past year indicated that they had used the information in their own course work.

Networking. VIEDS has played an important role in creating linkages between people, programs, and resources. This role has been evident in the frequent sharing of information among clients, the stimulation of mutual assistance among personnel, and the creation of better working relationships between the two islands and between school building and district levels, and the forging of special relationships with stateside labs and other external agencies, other local agencies and educational programs, and other Caribbean islands.

With respect to sharing of information, 41 per cent of VIEDS' clients this year indicated in our evaluation

survey that they were "able to provide the information to others who needed it." And when we asked if the client talked about the information or shared it with anyone, 75 per cent replied in the affirmative. And when asked approximately how many persons they shared it with, the average number per client was 7.5 persons.

Sharing of information has also occurred in a more organized context, of course, as shown by the workshops that VIEDS has stimulated or participated in. Bringing staff members together for mutual assistance has been another major form of networking. For example, a teacher of reading on the high school level was asked, for their teachers' day, to conduct a workshop on reading in the areas of math. The linker brought her together with the math supervisor at SAFA who had already ordered information from VIEDS. Consequently, a successful workshop was held at the island's largest high school. In another case, as mentioned earlier, the linker brought together persons interested in improving their school scheduling process, which led to computerized scheduling workshops and the adoption of computerized scheduling. Other examples of networking have already been mentioned in connection with bilingual education workshops, development of curriculum centers, and preparation of proposals for federal funding. All of these efforts entailed the integration of resources, personnel, and information from a variety of sources.

A special effort has been made to serve other federal programs in the Department. Thus, searches are frequently conducted for the local NDN project, and many follow-up requests are made by teachers as a result. Further, personnel of ESAA, SAFA, ESEA Title I and Title IV projects have been heavy users of our services. And when federal funds were made available through Title VI for the purchase of hardware for innovative programs in reading and math, the linker brought the message to the schools and encouraged them to participate in the competition. In addition to improving ties with such projects, VIEDS personnel have participated in a variety of local committees, conferences, and workshops, and have travelled to the States to establish closer relationships with R & D agencies, including NIE. One of the linkers participated in the Youth Planning Committee which brought together a number of agencies to deal with problems confronting VI youth. The same linker also attended a conference at the College on West Indian Literary Criticism and appealed to the participants to submit their papers to VIEDS for dissemination, while another linker presented a paper entitled "The Education Dissemination Model: Toward a Solution to Fragmentation" at a conference of the Caribbean Studies Association. Through this and other efforts, closer ties have been established with other Caribbean islands, and especially with Puerto Rico (as described earlier).

Finally, VIEDS has become increasingly active in referring personnel to others with special skills or interests in the educational system. Thus, a human resource file has gradually taken shape. Geography teachers have been brought together, an art teacher who individualized her crafts lessons was put in touch with a young principal who is adept at finding grant money, a high school teacher and her troupe of young dancers was persuaded to give a dance and storytelling performance at an elemmentary school, and so on. Examples of this sort could be multiplied many times.

Overall use. Finally, our recent survey of clients revealed that the great majority used the information in some way. When asked about the specific uses of the information and given a check-list for response, only 7 per cent of the clients said that they "have not been able to use it at all." The free-answer responses of the clients to another question that asked them to describe their specific uses confirms this high level of impact.

C. Client Responsiveness and Satisfaction

Three surveys have been conducted to measure the responsiveness and satisfaction of educational personnel with the project's services. The first survey collected base line data on information use before the project began; the second was conducted with reference to the first year of the project (1978-79); and the third survey was conducted among clients and non-clients in 1983. The purposes of the surveys of clients were to measure satisfaction with various aspects of the service (information quality, linker performance, turnaround time, etc.), to identify specific ways in which the information had been used and the extent of such use, to learn about the characteristics of clients who were being served more or less satisfactorily, and to elicit suggestions for improving the service. Since many of the same questions were asked in successive surveys, we were able to measure changes in clients' perceptions over a five year period. (for a description of research methodology and complete results, see Knowledge for What? -- An Evaluation of an Educational Dissemination System (January, 1981), and Getting It Together -- An Evaluation of the Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System (A Five Year Follow-Up), (October, 1983).

The same questions (with one minor exception) about satisfaction with information and personal assistance were asked of a sample of all educational personnel before VIEDS, of clients after one year of VIEDS, and in the recent survey of both clients and non-clients. These questions were:

Information about educational practices or ideas comes from many sources, including journals, books, personnel in your school or district, workshops, curriculum guides, etc.

A. During this school year, how adequate was the availability of

	Information (check one)	Personal assistance (check one)
Very adequate	_____	_____
Adequate	_____	_____
Inadequate	_____	_____
Very inadequate	_____	_____
Had none this year	_____	_____

B. In general, how would you rate the usefulness of the information and personal assistance that you acquired in this school year?

(SAME CATEGORIES AS ABOVE)

First, it is worth noting the proportion of clients and non-clients in the most recent school year who said that they had "had none this year" in reply to both of the above questions. With regard to availability of information, none of the clients gave this response, compared with 12 percent of the non-clients; and with regard to availability of assistance, 4 percent of the clients gave this response, compared with 17 percent of the non-clients. Clearly, non-clients were not as likely to receive information or personal assistance as the clients of VIEDS. (See Table 1).

With regard to usefulness of information and personal assistance, the differences between clients and non-clients are even larger. Only 2 percent of the clients said they had not received any useful information, compared with 19 percent of the non-clients; and only 5 percent of the clients said they had not received any useful assistance, compared with 23 percent of the non-clients. Thus, in

TABLE I

Proportions of Clients and Non-Clients Who Did Not Receive Any Information or Assistance During 1982-83

	% received none	
	Clients	Non-clients
Availability of		
information	— (139)	12% (77)
assistance	4% (124)	17% (70)
Usefulness of		
information	2% (133)	19% (73)
assistance	5% (116)	23% (57)

the absence of VIEDS, one might assume that about one-fifth of the Department's personnel would be without useful information or assistance; while in the presence of VIEDS, this is almost never the case among clients.

Moreover, the information and assistance that is received by non-clients is valued much less than that received by clients. Table 2 presents the relevant figures, including the responses of educational personnel before the implementation of VIEDS and after one year. The percentage of personnel who felt that availability of information was "very adequate" has increased markedly: 3 percent before the project, 34 percent the first year, and 50 percent in the most recent year. In contrast, among non-clients in the most recent year only 22 percent gave this response.

It is noteworthy, however, that even non-clients in 1982-83 were more highly satisfied with availability of information than were personnel before the project was implemented. Closer inspection of our data reveals that this is mainly due to the responses of those non-clients in 1982-83 who had formerly been clients. These former clients were a good deal more likely to say that availability of information had been "very adequate" than were persons who had never been clients. This result suggests that former clients had developed a capacity for knowledge utilization as a result of their involvement with VIEDS that endured beyond that initial involvement. And indeed, a larger proportion of former clients than of never clients (25% vs 5%) reported in another part of our questionnaire that they had received information from VIEDS indirectly in the current year. In sum, the large minority of non-clients who were highly satisfied with availability of information owed their satisfaction to VIEDS despite their not being direct recipients of the service in 1982-83.

TABLE II

Satisfaction of Clients Before Project, One Year Later, and Five Years Later with Availability of Information and Assistance

	Before project	1978-79	1982-83	
			Clients	Non-clients
Availability of information				
Very adequate	3% (725)	34% (205)	50% (139)	22% (68)
Availability of assistance				
Very adequate	*	43% (185)	55% (119)	26% (58)

	Clients			
	St. Thomas		St. Croix	
	'78-79	'82-83	'78-79	'82-83
Availability of information				
Very adequate	36% (116)	56% (70)	36% (66)	49% (37)
Availability of Assistance				
Very adequate	43% (106)	64% (61)	49% (59)	41% (32)

* Not asked in survey before project.

With regard to satisfaction with the availability of personal assistance, here we find that a lesser improvement occurred over the past few years. In the first year of the project 43 percent indicated that availability of assistance was "very adequate," and in 1982-83 55 percent gave the same response. The improvement is significant, but not as strong as in the case of information per se. However, these figures mask a major difference between the two districts. In St. Croix, favorable judgments of assistance slightly declined, while in St. Thomas was a marked increase. All of the data referred to can be found in Table 2. And here we confront a difference in linker styles between the two islands. (Clients of persons who were assisting the full-time linker in St. Thomas are removed from this comparison between islands so that the two experienced linkers may be compared more sharply.) As can be seen, 64 percent in St.Thomas felt that availability of assistance was "very adequate" compared with 41 percent in St. Croix in 1982-83. One linker increased her availability to a pronounced degree while the other decreased it slightly.

Thus far we have been discussing sheer availability of information and personal assistance. When we turn to the usefulness of these two types of resources, we find a similar trend of improvement over the past five years, as shown in Table 3. And once again, we also find that ratings of assistance declined in St. Croix, but increased significantly in St. Thomas, between the first and most recent year of the project. Usefulness of information remained fairly constant in both districts, as measured by this question. Further, non-clients were not significantly more satisfied with usefulness of information in 1982-83 than were personnel before the project commended. However, these findings should not distract our attention from the important point that clients of

TABLE III

Satisfaction of Clients Before Project, One Year Later, and Five Years Later with Usefulness of Information and Assistance

	Before project	1978-79	1982-83	
			Clients	Non-clients
Usefulness of information				
Very adequate	15% (681)	40% (202)	44% (131)	19% (59)
Usefulness of assistance				
Very adequate	*	44% (183)	56% (110)	30% (44)

	Clients			
	St. Thomas		St. Croix	
School year:	'78-79	'82-83	'78-79	'82-83
Usefulness of information				
Very adequate	41% (112)	49% (70)	37% (67)	38% (34)
Usefulness of assistance				
Very adequate	45% (103)	59% (58)	45% (60)	38% (31)

the service in the most recent year were far more likely than non-clients to say that information was very useful (44% vs 19%).

Responses to another question reveal a much greater trend in favor of usefulness over the past few years. Clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83 were asked:

> How about the practical value of the information as a whole (abstracts, articles, packages, microfiche, etc.)?
>
> _____Very useful _____Moderately useful
> _____Only slightly useful _____Not useful

In the first year of the project, 44 percent said that it was "very useful," but a few years later 64 percent gave the same response. Here once again we detect a marked improvement in the service. Further, virtually the same level of improvement occurred in both districts.

One final overall question that bears on personal assistance remains to be discussed. Clients and non-clients in 1982-83 were asked whether they desired more help with implementation:

> In general, do you feel that you need more personal help in implementing new ideas or practices in your work, less help, or about the same amount of help as you have been receiving?
>
> More help___ Less help___ About the same___

Table 3 presents the responses to this question among clients and non-clients. While more than half of the non-clients asserted that they needed more help with implementation, only a third of VIEDS' clients gave this response. About three-fourths of the latter felt that assistance should remain about the same. These data attest

TABLE IV

Proportion of Clients and Non-clients in 1982-83 Who Said They Needed More Help, Less Help, or the Same Help with Implementation

	Clients	Non-clients
More help	28%	53%
Less help	8	1
Same amount	64	46
	100%	100%
	(91)	(74)

to the contribution that VIEDS' personnel have made to the actual implementation of new practices and ideas in addition to the provision of information. (The same magnitude of difference between clients and non-clients occurred on both islands.)

To summarize: We have seen that the clients of VIEDS are much more likely to receive useful information about new ideas and practices than non-clients. Moreover, the information that is received by non-clients is not valued as highly as that received by clients, which testifies to the superiority of a national data bank with an efficient retrieval capacity over conventional methods of dissemination. Further, since VIEDS' clients were also much more often satisfied with personal assistance, it is obvious that the work of the local linkers is also quite valuable. And improvement has been very marked in these respects since the inception of the project. We have also noted that former clients keep in touch with the project indirectly, and are therefore better served than personnel who have never been clients. This indicates that exposure to the project is not a hit and run experience for clients. Apparently, their own capacity for information use independently of direct involvement with linkers has been enhanced. And the greater involvement of opinion leaders among VIEDS' clients suggests that information and assistance will radiate throughout the system. That this is indeed taking place is indicated by the large number of secondary recipients reported to us by the primary clients of VIEDS.

If these generalizations are reliable, then we should find that both clients and non-clients of VIEDS would welcome the opportunity for continued assistance from the project. And this is indeed the case, as signified by the responses to the following question:

Would you like to be contacted by us in the near future for assitance in acquiring information on a particular topic or problem related to your work?

Yes____ No____

Seventy-seven percent of the clients and 78 percent of the non-clients responded affirmatively to this question. Since this question bears on a real desire to receive information on a concrete, personal topic or problem, it is probably more reflective of a genuine need for the service than some of the broader questions referred to earlier. In short, it is evident that more than three quarters of educational personnel are anxious to avail themselves of VIEDS' services "in the near future."

Satisfaction with particular aspects of the services

Turnaround time. Owing to the isolation of the Virgin Islands and the sluggishness of the postal system, a critical question is the amount of time that is required to obtain resources from the states. As mentioned earlier, the linker in St. Thomas has set up her own data bank comprising previous SMERC information, and in the past year she and an assistant made extensive use of this localized source. Thus, it becomes important to see if satisfaction with turnaround time was enhanced as a result of this activity. That this was indeed the case can be seen in the responses to the following question:

With regard to your needs, was the amount of time it took to receive the information:

Too long_____ A reasonable length of time____
Sooner than expected_____

In 1978-79 19 percent said "sooner than expected." In 1982-83, of those who received information from the retrieval agency in the states, 37 percent gave this response; and of those who received information from our local data bank, 67 percent so responded. Clearly, there is greater satisfaction than previously, and expecially if the local resource files were utilized.

In terms of actual time spent in retrieving information, clients who were served by the stateside agency waited 5.4 weeks on average, while those who were served by local files waited only a few days. It is not surprising that the latter would feel that the information was provided "sooner than expected," therefore. Later we shall see if this method of retrieval was more or less likely to have impact than reliance on the stateside agency, and more or less likely to be favorably evaluated for its content.

Before leaving the matter of turnaround time, it is informative to note that almost all requests for information were classified as "somewhat" urgent (as opposed to "very" or "not" urgent) on the information request forms. Thus, clients are generally perceived as needing information in as short a time as possible -- although this notational habit might also be due to the linkers' fear that a "not urgent" request would be ignored by the retrieval agency.

Characteristics of the information. Since clients on the whole are satisfied with turnaround time, other aspects are perhaps more important. A very critical aspect of the service concerns the characteristics of the information itself. The clients were asked to indicate their judgment of the information supplied to them with respect to seven attributes: relevance, comprehensiveness, newness, usefulness without further information or help, understandability, guidance provided, and ease of implementation in their setting. (See question 8 in the appendix.) Table 4 shows

the proportion of clients in 1978-79 and in 1982-83 who gave a score of 1 or 2 to each dimension on a scale of 7 points, thereby indicating a high degree of satisfaction. And we see little change in the rank order from one period to the next, with the exceptions of relevance and usability without any additional resources. Both of these attributes were scored higher than a few years ago. Autonomous usability made an especially strong showing, moving from next to last in rank order to next to first; and this shift occurred in the case of both linkers. (Relevance improved only with respect to St. Croix.) This improvement suggests that the linkers became more skilled in acquiring information that would "stand alone."

Characteristics of linkers' performance. The clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83 were asked to rate the linkers according to four scales: initial understanding of the problem or need, helpfulness in interpreting the materials or information, helpfulness in using the information, and availability when needed. Table 5 shows the proportion of clients in each of two periods who rated the linkers "excellent" on a five point scale ranging from "excellent" to "poor", the proportion who gave other ratings, and the proportion who said that this aspect of the linkers' role "did not occur." The only notable difference between the two periods is that a smaller proportion said that helping use the information did not occur and a larger proportion rated the linkers excellent on this dimension. Thus, it appears that helping the client to implement a new practice or idea was a more prominent feature of the linkers' role in the more recent period. But this change applies to only a single linker -- the linker in St. Thomas, whose "did not occur" rating dropped from 30 percent in 1978-79 to 2 percent in 1982-83. Ratings of the other linker actually moved in the opposite direction: from 37 percent saying that help in using information did not occur in 1978-79 to 44 percent responding in this

TABLE V

Clients' Evaluations of Various Features of the Information in 1978-79 and 1982-83

	% highly favorable (1,2 on scale 1-7)	
	1978-1979	1982-1983
Easily understood, no difficulty with language or ideas	78% (205)	79% (114)
Very comprehensive in coverage	45% (205)	48% (114)
Highly relevant to my need or request	45% (205)	58% (116)
Provided guidance for implementation or use	41% (199)	48% (114)
Would be easy to implement or use in my school or agency	40% (196)	42% (114)
Could be used or applied without additional information or help	38% (202)	56% (115)
Very new to me, quite enlightening	27% (205)	30% (115)

* Bases of percentages vary owing to variation in number of respondents who answered each scale.

fashion in 1982-83. Once again, therefore, we detect a divergence in the styles of the two linkers. This finding is consistent with our earlier observation that favorable judgments of assistance actually declined in St. Croix, while the St. Thomas linker elicited a much higher level of approval than before.

These contrasting trends in the two islands may be due to the reduced time commitment of the St. Croix linker together with her tendency to focus on district level administrators who were involved in writing planning papers. This focus of attention would reduce the need for personal assistance on the linker's part. And indeed, we have seen that the single largest percentage increase in positive attitudes towards the information occurred in St. Croix with respect to "could be used or applied without additional information or help." Further, when asked about the need for more, less, or the same amount of help with implementation, as many as 18 percent of the Crucian clients said less help compared with only 3 percent of the St. Thomian clients. In short, the amount of help that the linkers gave in each district seems to have been an accommodation to their respective clients, which in turn, of course, was influenced by the linkers' own decisions about which clients she wished to serve.

Similar, although less pronounced, differences occur between the two linkers with regard to "helpfulness in interpreting the materials or information received," and "availability when needed." The Crucian linker elicited a much higher percentage of "did not occur" responses than the St. Thomian linker, and especially with regard to "availability." Twenty-nine percent of the Crucian clients in 1982-83 indicated that availability "did not occur," compared with only 2 percent of the St. Thomian clients. And this difference is largely due to a decline in availability of the Crucian linker between 1978-79 and 1982-83. As mentioned earlier, this is no doubt

TABLE VI

Clients' Evaluations of Various Features of the Linker's Role in 1978-79 and 1982-83

	1978-79	1982-83
Initial understanding of your problem or need		
Excellent	68%	67%
Other response	32	31
Did not occur	*	2
	100%	100%
	(212)	(117) *
Availability when needed		
Excellent	54%	56%
Other response	38	35
Did not occur	8	9
	100%	100%
	(202)	(110)
Helpfulness in interpreting the materials or information received		
Excellent	47%	47%
Other response	28	33
Did not occur	25	20
	100%	100%
	(204)	(108)
Helpfulness in using the information		
Excellent	30%	43%
Other response	34	37
Did not occur	36	20
	100%	100%
	(198)	(97)

* Bases of percents vary because of variations in replies.
** Less than 1%.

owing to the reduction of time spent by the Crucian linker on dissemination as a result of her increasing commitment to other professional endeavors. In sum, one linker moved in the direction of being more <u>available</u> for <u>help with implementation</u>, while the other moved in exactly the opposite direction.

It should be noted, however, that when the Crucian linker <u>did</u> offer these services, she was rated as highly as the St. Thomian linker, with one exception: "initial understanding of your problem or need." While 85 percent of the St. Thomian clients rated the linker excellent on this dimension, 58 percent of the Crucian clients gave their linker this rating. Further, this approval rate increased over time for the St. Thomian linker but decreased for the Crucian linker. And this shift is confirmed by data on the extent to which the linkers reported they assisted the clients in developing the statement of the problem or need (as indicated on the Information Request Form). As shown in Table 12, 51 percent of the clients in St. Thomas were helped "extensively," while none of the clients in St. Croix received this amount of help. This notable difference is a function of different types of clients as well as different role definitions in the two districts, as mentioned earlier.

D. Significant Learnings

From the beginning, the St. Thomas/St. John school district linker/supervisor has used the IPOD dissemination model: going into the field, discovering needs, delivering the latest research findings in education and showing clients how to use this material. We have learned that an experienced linker working in the field develops sensing mechanisms which often permit her to identify the nature of a client's problems even before the client is able to ascertain them. We have made it a practice to see at first hand what are the needs of educators by visiting the schools and establishing credibility for VIEDS. By appearing to be a helper, and not a person in a supervisory capacity (electing to be on a first name basis), the linker is better able to establish non-threatening relationships with administrators and teachers wherever they are: the lunch room, lounge, office, library or unused classroom. Except for protocol, when the linker visits the principal first, she is separated from the administration in the eyes of the teachers. This disassociation is important since a teacher might be otherwise reluctant to expose weakness or inexperience to an authority figure. Affording privacy, and providing reliable and useful help are among our main goals in the dissemination process.

The negotiation session has proven to be the most fruitful step for the client and linker. It affords the time when the linker is able to help the client sort out his

own thinking, give reassurance, and allow him to talk about what he is doing in the classroom or office. The client feels unthreatened by a person who is not going to rate or criticize him. It is during this session that the linker suggests the kinds of information which can prove invaluable, whether it consists of curriculum guides, teaching techniques, special projects, latest research in a specific area and so forth. It also gives the linker the opportunity to suggest assistance from people in the community who have similar interests and/or concerns. This person-to-person linking has been successful. An example of this is a recent linkage by the disseminator of various groups heretofore unknown to one another in the community, all working on an effort to curb teen-age pregnancy. Another example of this kind of linkage was for kindergarten teachers of various schools to phone one another to see how each was managing highly-structured programs. The linker acted as mediator between the two program persons in getting relief for the over-burdened and harried teachers.

Delivering searches, personally, offers yet another opportunity for the linker to work with the client. The client's problems are reviewed and the linker can then motivate and encourage him to read the information (both microfiche and hard copy) and apply the data to his situation. Subsequent follow-up is essential because it gives the linker

another opportunity to reinforce, support and suggest sharing the material with others. The client is asked again, if he needs further information and/or linkage.

Because we are a small island, information is sometimes unavailable, unreliable or difficult to get. Mail delivery is slow. We cannot simply hop into a car and drive to a university library. Going abroad to seek higher degrees or training is costly and sometimes creates a hardship for a teacher who might have to leave her family behind. Realizing this, VIEDS has instituted a file of the most popular searches that have been requested. Over the five years, we have developed it to the point where we can furnish some requested information in less than twenty-four hours. Because we have asked that microfiche supplied by SMERC or VIEDS be returned when they are no longer required, we are able to recirculate the fiche and enhance the hard-copy in-house searches. Through the years, we have collected and filed articles from current educational journals and periodicals which are the basis of our data bank.

However, this does not mean that a small island or rural area like ours can hope to build a large enough practice file to meet all of its information needs, nor can it easily go on-line to an outside base since by its physical isolation it is poor in technical resources. When machines break down, there are few if any persons to repair them,

or keep them maintained. We believe that an area like the Virgin Islands is best served by being associated with an all-service information data bank like SMERC which has proven to be efficient, reliable and sensitive to the needs of our educators, as well as by developing as large a local base as possible. This kind of organization permits the linker to be in the field, linking, which is the most important function of an educational dissemination system, freeing her from the headaches and disappointments of break-downs in the flow of information to clients.

Over the five years we learned that there is a great need for current, useful information properly presented, and that good linking is akin to teacher training in that it enables clients to grow professionally without insurmountable obstacles.

E. Outside Agencies

During the second year of VIEDS the two linkers, on the advice of NIE, visited the Appalachia Education Laboratory in West Virginia. It was felt that the lab served communities not unlike the Virgin Islands. The visit resulted in establishing a good relationship which we have kept up over the years. We brought back helpful career education materials and learned about the outreach programs in parenting. These models have been useful in working with groups interested in such programs here. In addition, AEL and VIEDS set up workshops in school scheduling on both St. Thomas and St. Croix. Now, after much study and team work, two pilot junior high schools on St. Thomas have successfully used the computer programs for scheduling fall classes and teacher assignments. We continue to receive AEL's linking news and are looking forward to turning to them once again in our RDU effort at one of the pilot schools, this time it will probably be in the area of parent/teacher communication.

We have also gotten RDU initial training from the Network in Andover, Massachusetts and hope, after funds are made available, to receive additional training. Northwest Laboratory has been very generous with their materials on computer education and software evaluation. We are in correspondence with them. Our relations with our local NDN

person are very good, as well. VIEDS supplies much research material to her before she begins any program, and she, in turn, acts as linker and liaison when our clients need help which NDN programs can serve. She has been especially successful in implementing the Prevention of Early Childhood Failure, and we work together in trying to trouble-shoot in that area.

F. VIEDS IST YEAR OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION 1982-1983

We have completed the institutionalization of VIEDS as a result of the consolidation of federal grants under Title V. P.L. 95-134, Omnibus Territories Act.

In addition, we have further coordinated the dissemination components of existing federal and local programs through the coordination of efforts and the networking of funding.

VIEDS has further improved communications and relations with other agencies such as local public health and public safety, processing their information for our clients and disseminating our stateside data to them for their outpatients and clients.

For a short period, we were able to obtain the services of a full time linker/retrieval specialist to enhance our field services and to bring greater efficiency to the operation or our in-house data bank. This support staff effort had to end because of monetary difficulties.

We continued to further develop networking of people and agencies with information sources for the improvement of education. Highlights of this effort were in the area of school accreditation. VIEDS supplied many model curriculum guides for departments of secondary schools and other literature pertinent to school improvement in addition the linker brought principals and teachers, librarians together to discuss common problems. To date two secondary schools in the district of St. Thomas/St. John have been accredited

by the Middle States Association for ten years.

The linker's role as support personnel continues for major change projects in the area of use of computers in school administration and instruction, once again bringing personnel of various schools together to gain technical assistance. A highlight of this is the workshop arranged by VIEDS and given in the fall term by an original participant of the AEL workshop in school scheduling to interested persons in another school who wished to adopt the system.

The human resource file continues to grow and is frequently tapped by the linker in bringing various persons together who have common goals. An example is supporting community groups who share the growing concern for teaching sex education in the schools, and disseminating information about venereal disease and teen-age pregnancy to these groups.

VIEDS has subscribed to certain publications which are unavailable in the islands and which have proven indispensable to teachers, especially in the field of computer aided instruction.

Finally, we have increased our ability at very little extra expense to provide more current information to our client through the use of in-house searches.

The year 1982-83 saw the beginning of an RDU effort in the Virgin Islands. In the fall of 1982 VIEDS received partial training from the Network, Andover, Mass. In the

spring the St. Thomas/St. John linker received support from a junior high school principal to start a pilot project at the Addelita Cancryn Jr. High School. An orientation meeting was held for administrators and guidance counsellors. Plans were made to form a task force composed of administrators, teachers and parents. That task force is now a reality and their work is in progress with the linker acting as liaison and data provider.

While the number of stateside acquired searches (from SMERC) remains at 500, VIEDS has been able to increase the St. Thomas/St. John volume. In 1980-81, 25 in-house searches were done. In 1981-1982, 38 were done. But in 1982-83, 220 were completed. This dramatic increase was due to the extra support staff and the increase of data collection.

G. Equity

The population of the Virgin Islands is underserved and is almost totally made up of minorities. This situation applies as well to the entire educational community as indicated in the narrative of our NIE grant applications. It should be clear that any and all activities undertaken by VIEDS respond to the equity needs of our society. It should also be evident that VIEDS has worked toward improving the education climate, and helping to develop basic skills for our needy students. We have also served the community in nontraditional ways which reflect our attempts to improve equity in education.

Highlights of these more unusual aspects of our program which address equity are as follows: VIEDS hosted a Women's Equity Conference in Grantsmanship. We supplied supporting documentation that has helped to bring about major changes in attitudes on the part of the school authorities concerning the handicapped; as a result, a review and revision of high school diplomas for the handicapped was initiated. A community child abuse program was afforded information from our data base and the information was subsequently used on numerous educational T.V. programs over our local PBS station. VIEDS has also provided documentary support to alcohol and drug abuse programs for the Department of Public Safety. Since the Virgin Islands has an extremely

high rate of teen-age pregnancy, VIEDS has provided human resource and documentary support for establishing various programs for youth on sex education and teen-age pregnancy prevention. We were instrumental in researching and providing models for school and community alternative education programs. Now that these programs are in place, we continue to provide the teachers and administrators with instructional help, for example, providing special curriculum guides, local career education aides and Black history and supplementary cultural materials. Most recently, we have provided personal linkage and data for a community effort to start up a shelter for battered women and their children.

H. Summary of Results to Date

It is essential to read the following data carefully and reconsider the comments made in the introduction to this document in light of this information. We have not arrived at these data in a casual manner. They are the results of careful professional analysis and consultation with one of the "gurus" of educational dissemination, Dr. Sam Sieber of Columbia University, who, fortunately for us, resides in the territory.

There is enough positive information in these last pages to gladden the heart of any grant officer. Clearly Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System is an excellent example of how federal seed money can function to bring about change, or positive results; by establishing in this case, a system whose main function is to bring about change and whose linker is a change agent. Educational dissemination is alive and well in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Project Status Before and After NIE Funding

BEFORE	AFTER
Linkage	
No feeling that information could solve problems	Greater confidence in accepting and using information and assistance
Belief that information was acquired only in college	Awareness of multiple sources of information and local program personnel
Little confidence in ability to acquire information because of isolation	Widespread awareness of available resources.
Little knowledge among teachers about professional journals or organizations	Staff aware of professional organizations, available services, conferences, etc.
Complete ignorance about existence of ERIC	Majority of educational personnel have received ERIC microfiche
Poor understanding of educational planning in States; sense of professional isolation	Awareness of common problems and available solutions from elsewhere
Little knowledge of funding sources and technical assistance that is available	A number of federal projects based on information supplied for proposals and operations
Little awareness of special education needs and rights	Parent groups made aware, committees to protect handicapped based on information, etc.
Little willingness to share problems; ignorance of problem-solving models and no problem-solving process	Optimism about problem-solving and that information can be used and shared

No trained information/dissemination specialists	Two linkers with support staff trained in dissemination
No educational information service for legislature or school board	Use of service by legislators and school board
No communication among Caribbean islands re: education	Use of Caribbean Studies Association for dissemination functions
Little awareness or sensitivity regarding bilingual education needs	Training of teacher aides for bilingual education and development of program based on information and TA of project
Limited relations between Department and College	Closer relationships with college for staff development
<u>Resources</u>	
No usable ERIC file in college library	ERIC file is fully operational in college
Only one microfiche reader in school system	At least one reader in each school
No dissemination office	Project office with readers, printer, files, etc.
Limited network of resource personnel	A human resource file that is rapidly growing
No external resource center available for computerized retrieval	Annual contract with SMERC; relations with AEL & NW lab
No means of storing local materials for retrieval	SMERC file of local materials available

No packaging of materials on selected topics	Packaging of in-house searches (220 in '82)
No depositories of microfiche in offices and schools	Depositories in curriculum centers, several school libraries, and a few offices
No local file of hard copy or microfiche from SMERC for in-house retrieval	More than 7,000 items on file for in-house retrieval on selected topics
Leadership	
Fragmented development of curriculum	Curriculum committees dependent on information
No means of needs assessment	Needs assessments conducted by dissemination project
Uncoordinated in-service activities	Several in-service programs based on technical assistance and information from project e.g., computer literacy
No coordination of dissemination activities at Dept. level	Advisory Board comprised of staff with dissemination obligations
No evaluation of information needs and use/impact of dissemination	Periodic evaluation of needs and use/impact for top level planning

GETTING IT TOGETHER

An Evaluation of the Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System

(A Five Year Follow-Up)

Sam D. Sieber
Educational Research Consultant
U.S.V.I.

October, 1983

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The Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System

The overarching purpose of the V.I. Educational Dissemination System (VIEDS) is to provide useful information about educational practices, policies, and ideas upon request to educators who are working in a very isolated setting with extremely limited local resources. The project was supported for several years by the National Institute of Education (with increased funding from the local Department as federal funds declined) as a participant in the State Dissemination Capacity Building program in NIE. This program was extended to 44 states, but is now virtually at an end.

A unique feature of VIEDS has been the effort of full-time "linkers" who meet with clients at all levels of the local educational system to learn about their needs for assistance or information, to refer the client's request to a computerized retrieval agency in the states (San Mateo Educational Resources Center, San Mateo, California, or SMERC), and to deliver the information to clients when it arrives in the V.I. Of the 44 states or territories that received grants for dissemination, the Virgin Islands is the only one that created full-time linkers and continued their support throughout the five years of the project, thereby following the successful model of the Pilot State Dissemination Project (USOE-NIE, 1970-71). This arrangement was made feasible in the Virgin Islands by the small size of the territorial school system. In contrast, the other grant recipients have concentrated on developing resource banks at the state level and trying to adapt existing personnel and structures for linking purposes. Thus, owing to the uniqueness of the V.I. project, this report might be of special interest to stateside dissemination personnel at both state and local levels.

One full-time linker has been employed in each of two districts (St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix) for the past five years. These have been assisted from time to time by part-time linkers, including a few librarians, and by office personnel. In the past year the linker in St. Croix reduced her time commitment to dissemination because of involvement in other professional activities of the Department.

The information that is delivered to Virgin Islands clients from SMERC might take the form of abstracts, bibliographies, copies of articles (usually on microfiche card), or references to other sources. This information might be supplemented by locally produced resources, of course; and indeed, many local products have been supplied to SMERC for inclusion in its own data bank. Finally, it should be noted that the linkers perform a variety of other services, such as facilitating communication and assistance among personnel, initiating and participating in workshops, evaluating information that has been

sent by SMERC, retrieving information locally, consulting in areas of their special expertise, and personally assisting in the implementation of new practices. In one of our two districts, a data bank has been compiled based on materials sent by SMERC over the past several years, and this data bank is regularly consulted by the linker when trying to answer a request.

Types of clients, information, purposes of requests, and specific uses of information and assistance will be presented in the remainder of this report. In particular, we shall be concerned with the impact of the project on the educational system, and the extent to which educational personnal at all levels have come to rely on the project. But first, we need to describe our evaluation surveys past and present.

Evaluation Surveys

The present survey is the third in a series of evaluation surveys of VIEDS' clients and non-clients. The first survey collected base line data on information use before the project began; and the second was conducted with reference to the first year of the project (1978-79).

The purposes of the latter survey were to determine the satisfaction of clients with various aspects of the service (information quality, linker performance, turnaround time, etc.), to identify specific ways in which the information had been used and the extent of such use, to learn about the characteristics of clients who were being served more or less satisfactorily, and to elicit suggestions for improving the service. A special purpose was to determine whether clients who had been identified in the earlier survey as most likely to need, use, or share information actually did so. In other words, the project sought to determine whether the impact of the service could be enhanced by concentrating on certain "promising clients," a procedure that is technically known as market segmentation. And indeed, this was found to be the case. A general purpose of the second survey, of course, was to gain data for comparison with the state of affairs prior to the implementation of VIEDS. In this respect we found a substantial improvement in satisfaction with the availability and the usefulness of both information and personal assistance. For a complete presentation of the results of this earlier survey, see Knowledge for What? -- An Evaluation of an Educational Dissemination System (VIEDS, V.I. Dept. of Education, January, 1981).

The present survey was conducted in the fifth year of the project. Because many of the same questions were asked in earlier years, it becomes possible to measure trends in information availability, quality, and use over a period of several years. Moreover, the fact that the same two linkers have been employed in each of two districts (separated by fifty miles of open sea) gives us an opportunity to compare the effects of different linker styles in the same socio-cultural setting. This comparison, as we shall see, suggests a fundamental

dimension in information linkage that is often overlooked.

Questionnaires were mailed to all clients of the service who had received information between September 31, 1982, and March 15, 1983. Since questionnaires were mailed in April and May, 1983, all clients had had at least two weeks to evaluate or use the information. The number of clients who received questionnaires in St. Thomas-St. John was 138, of whom 11 were eliminated because they were not served by the linkers; and the number in St. Croix was 45.* The return rates for St. Thomas and St Croix were 84 percent and 87 percent, respectively. A random sample of educational personnel who had not been served by VIEDS in the designated time period was also selected, and a special questionnaire was sent to them to measure their evaluation of the availability and usefulness of information and personal assistance in the absence of being served by the project. Every fourth and fifth name was alternately selected from the Department's directory in order to obtain a sample of approximately 200 non-clients (the exact number was 204) in St. Thomas; and every ninth name was selected for St. Croix, which yielded 100 non-clients.** Fewer names were selected in St. Croix because time was running out at the end of the school year and office personnel were more limited than in St. Thomas. The return rates of non-clients' questionnaires were 25 percent and 40 percent in St. Thomas and St. Croix, respectively. Many uncompleted questionnaires were returned because the respondent was no longer in the school system or was otherwise unavailable.

Results

First, we shall try to answer the following basic questions: who has used the service (position, level, subject, and opinion leadership), and for what general purposes? Second, we shall examine the satisfaction of clients and non-clients with the availability and usefulness of both information and personal assistance, and their need for more help in implementing new practices; and the satisfaction of clients with turnaround time, features of the information, and the activities of the linkers. Third, we shall look at specific uses of the information and try to determine level of impact. And finally, we shall see whether local retrieval of information from our own data bank has been as effective as retrieval from SMERC. Several of these questions will be addressed over time by comparison with past survey results.

Who uses the service and why?

The distribution of clients according to their position is shown in Table 1 where we also show the figures for 78-79. Since administrators comprise only about 8 percent of educational personnel, the fact that 19 percent in 78-79 and 24 percent in '82-83 were clients shows that administrators are over-represented among clientele. (The distribu- in St. Thomas and St. Croix is very similar, with the exception that

* Many more requests for information were processed than indicated by the number of clients, for many clients were repeaters.

** Crucian non-clients are weighted double in the totals for non-clients referred to in this report or appearing in tables.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83

	1978-79	1982-83	1982-83 St. T.	1982-83 St. C.
Administrators				
District	12%	9%	6%	17%
School	12	10	13	2
Specialists	7	12	13	11
Librarians	6	4	3	6
Teachers	59	65	65	64
School Board	2	--	--	--
Legislators	2	--	--	--
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(191)	(162)	(115)	(47)

TABLE 2

Grade Levels of Clients (1982-83) in Two Districts

	St. Thomas	St. Croix	Total
K - 6	56%	48%	54%
7 - 8	4	15	7
9 - 12	15	11	14
Other pos.	25	26	25
	100%	100%	100%
	(117)	(46)	(163)

TABLE 3

Subject Areas of Clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83

	1978-79	1982-83
Language arts	15%	12%
Special ed.	14	7
Mathematics	9	8
Fine arts (music, etc.)	9	6
Science	7	8
Physical ed.	7	4
Social studies	5	3
Practical arts (voc. ed., drivers ed., bus., etc.)	3	6
More than one of above	31	46
	100%	100%
	(125)	(117)

district level administrators are more often served in St. Croix, while school level administrators are more often served in St. Thomas. Thus, almost one out of five clients in St. Croix was a district level administrator. This was three times the proportion of district level administrators who were clients in St. Thomas. We shall return to this point when we discuss the different linkage styles of the two major linkers.)

Concerning grade levels of teachers served by VIEDS, Table 2 shows that more than half of the clients were elementary teachers, only 7 percent were junior high teachers, and 14 percent were senior high teachers. The under-representation of junior high teachers was especially marked in St. Thomas, where only 3 percent of the clients were located at this level compared with 15 percent in St. Croix.

All subject areas were served by the project, as can be seen in Table 3. St. Thomas devoted somewhat more attention to science and the fine arts, while St. Croix was more involved in math. But these differences are not large.

Concerning the general purpose of the information request, we see in Table 4 that, according to the information request forms filled out by the linkers, classroom planning/instruction and awareness were most frequently cited. (These data cannot be compared with '78-'79 because purposes were not multiple coded for that year.) Of greater interest, however, is the sizable difference between the two islands. While St. Croix concentrated its resources on curriculum development and special program planning (35% and 40%), St. Thomas concentrated on awareness and classroom planning/instruction (45% and 40%). And here we note a major difference in the two linking styles, with St. Croix being more involved in providing information for district level curriculum development while St. Thomas was more involved in raising levels of awareness and classroom activities of teachers. This difference reflects the fact that the St. Croix linker was more often involved with district administrators, and also that she reported to the Deputy Commissioner of Curriculum and Instruction who is located in St. Croix. In St. Thomas the linker reported to the VIEDS project director, who in turn reported directly to the Commissioner. Thus, the St. Thomas linker was freer to serve "the field," while the St. Croix linker was more restricted to "headquarters." These roles were not involuntary in either case, however; for both linkers preferred their respective strategies and felt that they were directing their energies at the most suitable level.

TABLE 4

General Purpose of the Requests
in Two Districts
(1982-83)

	St. T.	St. C.	Total
Awareness (background/reading assistance)	45%	--	32%
Classroom planning/instruction	40	8	31
Regular curriculum development/revision	15	35	21
Special program/project planning	10	40	19
Program evaluation	--	15	4
Dissertation, thesis research	1	--	1
Speech or report	--	2	1
Policy development	7	--	5
Graduate course	12	--	9
Other personal professional development	7	--	5
	137%*	100%	128%
	(115)	(48)	(163)

* The linker in St. Thomas sometimes checked more than one purpose for her clients.

A final feature of VIEDS' clients deserves special attention: their opinion leadership. It has long been known that certain individuals in an organization or community are more often sought out for information, opinions, advice, and so on, than other members. Many of the individuals whom we identified as "promising clients" in our earlier study were this type of person on the assumption that, one, they would be more interested in receiving information, and two, they would be more likely to share it with others. Thus, in order to see if VIEDS' clients were more likely than non-clients to be opinion leaders, we asked the following question of both types of personnel:

> How often are you asked for your opinion or advice by educational personnel about an educational issue?
>
> Very often ____
> Fairly often ____
> Sometimes ____
> Rarely ____

Table 5 shows the proportions of clients and non-clients who responded according to the above categories. And it is obvious that the clients were much more likely to respond "very often." This is a gratifying result, for it means that the information will have an audience beyond the primary recipient, and that this audience will take it seriously because of its source in an opinion leader. Indeed, if we add together the clients who said they were asked for advice very or fairly often, almost half (47%) have special influence over their peers. This contrasts with only a third (31%) of the non-clients. Clearly, VIEDS has directed its energies toward the more significant personnel in the system.

It is of further interest that this involvement of opinion leaders is not due to the concentration on district administrators in St. Croix, for in both districts almost exactly the same proportion of clients said that they were asked for advice very often or fairly often. Clearly, not all administrators are opinion leaders. In fact, a slightly higher percentage of clients in St. Thomas indicated that they were very often asked for advice than in St. Croix (32% and 24%, respectively), despite the fact that St. Thomas had 13 percent <u>fewer</u> district administrators or specialists among its clientele.

It would be a great mistake to assume, therefore, that the only clients of VIEDS are those whom we have described on the basis of their questionnaire responses and request forms. Indeed, when we asked, "Did you talk about the information or share it with anyone (other than the person who delivered it)?", 75 percent of VIEDS' clients replied in the affirmative. And when asked approximately how many persons they shared it with, the average number per client was 7.5 persons. Quite obviously, the total pool of clients extends far beyond the primary recipients of information. This was confirmed when we asked

TABLE 5

Proportions of Clients and Non-Clients
Who Are Opinion Leaders
(1982-83)

How often asked for advice:	Clients	Non-clients
Very often	28%	7%
Fairly often	19	25
Sometimes	33	37
Rarely	20	31
	100%	100%
	(118)	(81)

our so-called non-clients in 1982-83:

> To the best of your knowledge, has any information you received this year been supplied by our service [names of linkers were supplied] either directly or indirectly through someone not working for the service?

A third of these individuals said they had received information directly, and a fifth said they had received it indirectly. And yet, none of these individuals was listed as a client of the service in 1982-83. If we may generalize from these data, then it appears that more than half of the personnel in the Department of Education are annual recipients of VIEDS' services, even though the number of recorded primary clients is only about 10 percent of the Department's professional staff. If this projection is even approximately correct, it reflects quite favorably on the efforts of just two linkers with limited part-time help.

Now let us see whether clients believed that the services they have been receiving are valuable. First, we shall examine their general attitudes, and then turn to some specific features of the service, including the activities of the linkers.

Satisfaction with availability and usefulness of information: clients vs non-clients, and 1978-79 vs 1982-83

The same questions concerning satisfaction with information and personal assistance were asked of a sample of all educational personnel before VIEDS, of clients after one year of VIEDS, and in the recent survey of both clients and non-clients. These questions were:

Information about educational practices or ideas comes from many sources, including journals, books, personnel in your school or district, workshops, curriculum guides, etc.

a. During this school year, how adequate was the availability of

	Information (check one)	Personal assistance (check one)
Very adequate	___	___
Adequate	___	___
Inadequate	___	___
Very inadequate	___	___
Had none this year	___	___

b. In general, how would you rate the usefulness of the information and personal assistance that you acquired in this school year?

(SAME CATEGORIES AS ABOVE)

First, it is worth noting the proportion of clients and non-clients in the most recent school year who said that they had "had none this year" in reply to both of the above questions. With regard to availability of information, none of the clients gave this response, compared with 12 percent of the non-clients; and with regard to availability of assistance, 4 percent of the clients gave this response, compared with 17 percent of the non-clients. Clearly, non-clients were not as likely to receive information or personal assistance as the clients of VIEDS. (See Table 6.)

With regard to usefulness of information and personal assistance, the differences between clients and non-clients are even larger. Only 2 percent of the clients said they had not received any useful information, compared with 19 percent of the non-clients; and only 5 percent of the clients said they had not received any useful assistance, compared with 23 percent of the non-clients. Thus, in the absence of VIEDS, one might assume that about one-fifth of the Department's personnel would be without useful information or assistance; while in the presence of VIEDS, this is almost never the case among clients.

Moreover, the information and assistance that is received by non-clients is <u>valued</u> much less than that received by clients. Table 7 presents the relevant figures, including the responses of educational personnel before the implementation of VIEDS and after one year. The percentage of personnel who felt that availability of information was "very adequate" has increased markedly: 3 percent before the project, 34 percent the first year, and 59 percent in the most recent year. In contrast, among non-clients in the most recent year only 22 percent gave this response.

TABLE 6

Proportions of Clients and Non-Clients Who Did Not Receive Any Information or Assistance During 1982-83

	% received none	
	Clients	Non-clients
Availability of		
information	— (139)	12% (77)
assistance	4% (124)	17% (70)
Usefulness of		
information	2% (133)	19% (73)
assistance	5% (116)	23% (57)

TABLE 7

Satisfaction of Clients Before Project, One Year Later, and Five Years Later with Availability of Information and Assistance

	Before project	1978-79	1982-83	
			Clients	Non-clients
Availability of information				
Very adequate	3% (725)	34% (205)	50% (139)	22% (68)
Availability of assistance				
Very adequate	*	43% (185)	55% (119)	26% (58)

	Clients			
	St. Thomas		St. Croix	
	'78-79	'82-83	'78-79	'82-83
Availability of information				
Very adequate	36% (116)	56% (70)	36% (66)	49% (37)
Availability of Assistance				
Very adequate	43% (106)	64% (61)	49% (59)	41% (32)

* Not asked in survey before project.

It is noteworthy, however, that even non-clients in 1982-83 were more highly satisfied with availability of information than were personnel before the project was implemented. Closer inspection of our data reveal that this is mainly due to the responses of those non-clients in 1982-83 who had formerly been clients. These former clients were a good deal more likely to say that availability of information had been "very adequate" than were persons who had never been clients. This result suggests that former clients had developed a capacity for knowledge utilization as a result of their involvement with VIEDS that endured beyond that initial involvement. And indeed, a larger proportion of former clients than of never clients (25% vs 5%) reported in another part of our questionnaire that they had received information from VIEDS indirectly in the current year. In sum, the large minority of non-clients who were highly satisfied with availability of information owed their satisfaction to VIEDS despite their not being direct recipients of the service in 1982-83.

With regard to satisfaction with the availability of personal assistance, here we find that a lesser improvement occurred over the past few years. In the first year of the project 43 percent indicated that availability of assistance was "very adequate," and in 1982-83 55 percent gave the same response. The improvement is significant, but not as strong as in the case of information per se. However, these figures mask a major difference between the two districts. In St. Croix, favorable judgments of assistance slightly declined, while in St. Thomas there was a marked increase. All of the data referred to can be found in Table 7. And here we confront once again the difference in linker styles between the two islands. (Clie persons who were assisting the full-time linker in St. Thomas are removed from this comparison between islands so that the two experienced linkers may be compared more sharply.) As can be seen, 64 percent in St. Thomas felt that availability of assistance was "very adequate" compared with 41 percent in St. Croix in 1982-83. One linker increased her availability to a pronounced degree while the other decreased it slightly.

Thusfar we have been discussing sheer availability of information and personal assistance. When we turn to the usefulness of these two types of resources, we find a similar trend of improvement over the past five years, as shown in Table 8. And once again, we also find that ratings of assistance declined in St. Croix, but increased significantly in St. Thomas, between the first and most recent year of the project. Usefulness of information remained fairly constant in both districts, as measured by this question. Further, non-clients were not significantly more satisfied with usefulness of information in 1982-83 than were personnel before the project commenced. However, these findings should not distract our attention from the important point that clients of the service in the most recent year were far more likely than non-clients to say that information was very useful (44% vs 19%).

TABLE 8

Satisfaction of Clients Before Project, One Year Later, and Five Years Later with Usefulness of Information and Assistance

	Before project	1978-79	1982-83 Clients	1982-83 Non-clients
Usefulness of information Very adequate	15% (681)	40% (202)	44% (131)	19% (59)
Usefulness of assistance Very adequate	*	44% (183)	56% (110)	30% (44)

	Clients			
	St. Thomas		St. Croix	
School year:	'78-79	'82-83	'78-79	'82-83
Usefulness of information Very adequate	41% (112)	49% (70)	37% (67)	38% (34)
Usefulness of assistance Very adequate	45% (103)	59% (58)	45% (60)	38% (31)

Responses to another question reveal a much greater trend in favor of usefulness over the past few years. Clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83 were asked:

> How about the practical value of the information as a whole (abstracts, articles, packages, microfiche, etc.)?
>
> ____ Very useful ____ Moderately useful
> ____ Only slightly useful ____ Not useful

In the first year of the project, 44 percent said that it was "very useful," but a few years later 64 percent gave the same response. Here once again we detect a marked improvement in the service. Further, virtually the same level of improvement occurred in both districts.

One final, overall question that bears on personal assistance remains to be discussed. Clients and non-clients in 1982-83 were asked whether they desired more help with implementation:

> In general, do you feel that you need more personal help in implementing new ideas or practices in your work, less help, or about the same amount of help as you have been receiving?
>
> More help ____ Less help ____ About the same ____

Table 9 presents the responses to this question among clients and non-clients. While more than half of the non-clients asserted that they needed more help with implementation, only a third of VIEDS' clients gave this response. About three-fourths of the latter felt that assistance should remain about the same. These data attest to the contribution that VIEDS' personnel have made to the actual implementation of new practices and ideas in addition to the provision of information. (The same magnitude of difference between clients and non-clients occurred on both islands.)

To summarize: We have seen that the clients of VIEDS are much more likely to receive useful information about new ideas and practices than non-clients. Moreover, the information that is received by non-clients is not valued as highly as that received by clients, which testifies to the superiority of a national data bank with an efficient retrieval capacity over conventional methods of dissemination. Further, since VIEDS' clients were also much more often satisfied with personal assistance, it is obvious that the work of the local linkers is also quite valuable. And improvement has been very marked in these respects since the inception of the project. We have also noted that former clients keep in touch with the project indirectly, and are therefore better served than personnel who have never been clients. This indicates that exposure to the project is

TABLE 9

Proportion of Clients and Non-clients in 1982-83 Who Said They Needed More Help, Less Help, or the Same Help with Implementation

	Clients	Non-clients
More help	28%	53%
Less help	8	1
Same amount	64	46
	100%	100%
	(91)	(74)

not a hit and run experience for clients. Apparently, their own capacity for information use independently of direct involvement with linkers has been enhanced. And the greater involvement of opinion leaders among VIEDS' clients suggests that information and assistance will radiate throughout the system. That this is indeed taking place is indicated by the large number of secondary recipients reported to us by the primary clients of VIEDS.

If these generalizations are reliable, then we should find that both clients and non-clients of VIEDS would welcome the opportunity for continued assistance from the project. And this is indeed the case, as signified by the responses to the following question:

> Would you like to be contacted by us in the near future for assistance in acquiring information on a particular topic or problem related to your work?
>
> Yes ____ No ____

Seventy-seven percent of the clients and 78 percent of the non-clients responded affirmatively to this question. Since this question bears on a real desire to receive information on a concrete, personal topic or problem, it is probably more reflective of a genuine need for the service than some of the broader questions referred to earlier. In short, it is evident that more than three quarters of educational personnel are anxious to avail themselves of VIEDS' services "in the near future."

Satisfaction with particular aspects of the service

Turnaround time. Owing to the isolation of the Virgin Islands and the sluggishness of the postal system, a critical question is the amount of time that is required to obtain resources from the states. As mentioned earlier, the linker in St. Thomas has set up her own data bank comprising previous SMERC information, and in the past year she and an assistant made extensive use of this localized source. Thus, it becomes important to see if satisfaction with turnaround time was enhanced as a result of this activity. That this was indeed the case can be seen in the responses to the following question: question:

> With regard to your needs, was the amount of time it took to receive the information:
>
> Too long ____ A reasonable length of time ____
>
> Sooner than expected ____

In 1978-79, 19 percent said "sooner than expected." In 1982-83, of those who received information from the retrieval agency in the states, 37 percent gave this response; and of those who received

information from our local data bank, 67 percent so responded. Clearly, there is greater satisfaction than previously, and especially if the local resource files were utilized.

In terms of actual time spent in retrieving information, clients who were served by the stateside agency waited 5.4 weeks on average, while those who were served by local files waited only a few days. It is not surprising that the latter would feel that the information was provided "sooner than expected," therefore. Later we shall see if this method of retrieval was more or less likely to have impact than reliance on the stateside agency, and more or less likely to be favorably evaluated for its content.

Before leaving the matter of turnaround time, it is informative to note that almost all requests for information were classified as "somewhat" urgent (as opposed to "very" or "not" urgent) on the information request forms. Thus, clients are generally perceived as needing information in as short a time as possible -- although this notational habit might also be due to the linkers' fear that a "not urgent" request would be ignored by the retrieval agency.

Characteristics of the information. Since clients on the whole are satisfied with turnaround time, other aspects are perhaps more important. A very critical aspect of the service concerns the characteristics of the information itself. The clients were asked to indicate their judgment of the information supplied to them with respect to seven attributes: relevance, comprehensiveness, newness, usefulness without further information or help, understandability, guidance provided, and ease of implementation in their setting. (See question 8 in the appendix.) Table 10 shows the proportion of clients in 1978-79 and in 1982-83 who gave a score of 1 or 2 to each dimension on a scale of 7 points, thereby indicating a high degree of satisfaction. And we see little change in the rank order from one period to the next, with the exceptions of relevance and useability without any additional resources. Both of these attributes were scored higher than a few years ago. Autonomous useability made an especially strong showing, moving from next to last in rank order to next to first; and this shift occurred in the case of both linkers. (Relevance improved only with respect to St. Croix.) This improvement suggests that the linkers became more skilled in acquiring information that would "stand alone."

Characteristics of linkers' performance. The clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83 were asked to rate the linkers according to four scales: initial understanding of the problem or need, helpfulness in interpreting the materials or information, helpfulness in using the information, and availability when needed. Table 11 shows the proportion of clients in

TABLE 10

Clients' Evaluations of Various Features of the Information in 1978-79 and 1982-83

	% highly favorable (1,2 on scale 1-7)	
	1978-1979	1982-1983
Easily understood, no difficulty with language or ideas	78% (205)	79% (114)
Very comprehensive in coverage	45% (205)	48% (114)
Highly relevant to my need or request	45% (205)	58% (116)
Provided guidance for implementation or use	41% (199)	48% (114)
Would be easy to implement or use in my school or agency	40% (196)	42% (114)
Could be used or applied without additional information or help	38% (202)	56% (115)
Very new to me, quite enlightening	27% (205)	30% (115)

* Bases of percentages vary owing to variation in number of respondents who answered each scale.

each of two periods who rated the linkers "excellent" on a five point scale ranging from "excellent" to "poor," the proportion who gave other ratings, and the proportion who said that this aspect of the linkers' role "did not occur." The only notable difference between the two periods is that a smaller proportion said that helping use the information did not occur and a larger proportion rated the linkers excellent on this dimension. Thus, it appears that helping the client to implement a new practice or idea was a more prominent feature of the linkers' role in the more recent period. But this change applies to only a single linker — the linker in St. Thomas, whose "did not occur" rating dropped from 30 percent in 1978-79 to 2 percent in 1982-83. Ratings of the other linker actually moved in the opposite direction: from 37 percent saying that help in using information did not occur in 1978-79 to 44 percent responding in this fashion in 1982-83. Once again, therefore, we detect a divergence in the styles of the two linkers. This finding is consistent with our earlier observation that favorable judgments of assistance actually declined in St. Croix, while the St. Thomas linker elicited a much higher level of approval than before.

These contrasting trends in the two islands may be due to the reduced time commitment of the St. Croix linker together with her tendency to focus on district level administrators who were involved in writing planning papers. This focus of attention would reduce the need for personal assistance on the linker's part. And indeed, we have seen that the single largest percentage increase in positive attitudes towards the information occurred in St. Croix with respect to "could be used or applied without additional information or help." Further, when asked about the need for more, less, or the same amount of help with implementation, as many as 18 percent of the Crucian clients said less help compared with only 3 percent of the St. Thomian clients. In short, the amount of help that the linkers gave in each district seems to have been an accomodation to their respective clients, which in turn, of course, was influenced by the linkers' own decisions about which clients she wished to serve.

Similar, although less pronounced, differences occur between the two linkers with regard to "helpfulness in interpreting the materials or information received," and "availability when needed." The Crucian linker elicited a much higher percentage of "did not occur" responses than the St. Thomian linker, and especially with regard to "availability." Twenty-nine percent of the Crucian clients in 1982-83 indicated that availability "did not occur," compared with only 2 percent of the St. Thomian clients. And this difference is largely due to a decline in availability of the Crucian linker between 1978-79 and 1982-83. As mentioned earlier, this is no doubt owing to the reduction of time spent by the Crucian linker on dissemination as a result of her increasing commitment to other professional endeavors. In sum,

TABLE 11

Clients' Evaluations of Various Features of the Linker's Role in 1978-79 and 1982-83

	1978-79	1982-83
Initial understanding of your problem or need		
Excellent	68%	67%
Other response	32	31
Did not occur	*	2
	100%	100%
	(212)	(117) *
Availability when needed		
Excellent	54%	56%
Other response	38	35
Did not occur	8	9
	100%	100%
	(202)	(110)
Helpfulness in interpreting the materials or information received		
Excellent	47%	47%
Other response	28	33
Did not occur	25	20
	100%	100%
	(204)	(108)
Helpfulness in using the information		
Excellent	30%	43%
Other response	34	37
Did not occur	36	20
	100%	100%
	(198)	(97)

* Bases of percents vary because of variations in replies.
** Less than 1%.

one linker moved in the direction of being more available for ... help with implementation, while the other moved in exactly the opposite direction.

It should be noted, however, that when the Crucian linker did offer these services, she was rated as highly as the St. Thomian linker, with one exception: "initial understanding of your problem or need." While 85 percent of the St. Thomian clients rated the linker excellent on this dimension, 58 percent of the Crucian clients gave their linker this rating. Further, this approval rate increased over time for the St. Thomian linker but decreased for the Crucian linker. And this shift is confirmed by data on the extent to which the linkers reported they assisted the clients in developing the statement of the problem or need (as indicated on the Information Request Form). As shown in Table 12, 51 percent of the clients in St. Thomas were helped "extensively," while none of the clients in St. Croix received this amount of help. This notable difference is a function of different types of clients as well as different role definitions in the two districts, as mentioned earlier. However, the lower rating for the Crucian linker also suggests that clients in that district were not as well served with regard to the linkers' understanding of the problem as in St. Thomas. And lower ratings on the availability and usefulness of personal assistance in St. Croix, referred to earlier, point to the same conclusion. Thus, while there is some justification for being less proactive in St. Croix, there is still a need for a more active dissemination presence than prevailed in 1982-83.

Virtually the same story can be told with respect to another question:

> Did this person help you in any other way (e.g., put you in touch with other personnel, assisted with a meeting, etc.)? Yes ___ No ___ Don't recall ___
>
> IF YES: How would you rate their assistance in this respect? (Check one)
>
> Excellent ___ ___ Fair ___ ___ Poor ___

Not only did the Crucian linker less often help in other ways, but her rating (based on a very few cases) was perhaps lower, as seen in Table 13. The frequency with which the St. Thomian helped in other ways, incidentally, shows that the project is not strictly limited to dissemination of external information. A good deal of networking and leadership also occurred, at least in one of the districts. This is a point that is often overlooked. Dissemination

TABLE 12

Amount of Help Given by Linker to Client in Developing the Statement of the Problem or Need in Two Districts, 1978-79 and 1982-83

	St. Thomas		St. Croix	
	1978-79	1982-83	1978-79	1982-83
To what extent did you (linker) assist the client in developing the statement of the problem or need?				
Not at all	11%	1%	2%	—
Limited	52	14	11	2
Moderately	23	34	87	98
Extensively	14	51	--	--
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(92)	(73)	(54)	(45)

TABLE 13

Proportion of Clients Who Said that Linker Helped in Other Ways in Two Districts, in 1978-79 and 1982-83, and Clients' Evaluations

	St. Thomas		St. Croix	
	1978-79	1982-83	1978-79	1982-83
Helped in other way?				
Yes	31% (117)	38% (50)	46% (65)	15% (22)
How rated?				
Excellent	64% (36)	63% (19)	58% (31)	— (3)

projects are not fulfilling only dissemination functions. When full-time linkers are able to become involved in the daily professional activities of their clients, a uniquely integrative role emerges that reaches far beyond the standard definition of dissemination. And because the linker is not in a superordinate-subordinate relationship with educational personnel, as in the case of administrators, supervisors, and official coordinators, he or she is able to gain the voluntary commitment of personnel to follow-through on activities which they themselves have defined as urgent.

The different levels of performance that we have observed between the two linkers reminds us of a conclusion that we reached in our earlier study. There we compared the performance of two full-time linkers with a part-time one. We concluded:

> The differences that occurred in client response strongly suggest that full-time linkers are superior to part-time personnel as disseminators of educational information and resources. . . . we find a lower level of satisfaction with the availability of both information and personal assistance, and with the usefulness of personal assistance, in the case of the part-timer. . . . we note that several activities of linkers were less often performed or rated lower. . . These results give persuasive evidence of the benefits to be derived from full-time linkers. Not only do part-timers spend less time on dissemination functions, but these functions are subordinated to other obligations. The dissemination role does not emerge as a distinct and vital aspect of educational assistance, and consequently clients are not as well served as they might otherwise be. (p. 16, Knowledge for What? 1981)

Apparently, the lesson to be drawn from this observation was not heeded in the subsequent years of VIEDS, at least with respect to one of the two districts.

Now let us turn to another major feature of the service: the use of microfiche cards and readers.

Microfiche. In 1978-79 we found that 69 percent of the clients indicated that they had access to a microfiche reader (see question 9 in the Appendix). In the more recent year, 86 percent so responded. Thus, there has been an increase in accessibility over the years. The same proportion in both years indicated that they had actually used the machines (86 percent). The districts are almost identical in levels of accessibility and use.

How the information is used

The specific uses of the information were measured in two ways: by a check-list and by a free answer question that asked the clients to describe their use in detail. First we shall look at the responses to the check list. The question was as follows:

> Please indicate the responses below that most accurately describe the degree to which you have actually been able to use the information or materials that you received (please check all items that apply).

The responses of the clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83 are presented in Table 14.

The rank order of uses is very similar for the two time periods. The main exceptions are two: a greater tendency in the most recent period to use the information "to write a position paper or other paper that could be used in practice in the future," and a greater tendency to use the information for course work. It is also noteworthy that a smaller percentage than formerly said they had "been able to read it, but have not been able to actually put it into practice." All three of these shifts in response were due to Crucian clients. Thus, while only 14 percent of the latter said they had written a position paper in 1978-79, 39 percent gave this response in 1982-83; and while 14 percent mentioned course work formerly, 30 percent did so more recently. But perhaps of even greater significance, the proportion who said they had only read it and not used it dropped from 47 percent to 17 percent in St. Croix. In addition, the proportion who used it for research and evaluation increased from 21 percent to 39 percent. St. Thomian clients showed much less change on all these items.

These data underscore the shift in role definition of the linker in St. Croix over the several years of the project toward a more reactive type of response to clients who are more capable of using information on their own, particularly in the preparation of planning documents. The St. Thomian linker, in contrast, has been consistently more concerned with raising the awareness of a broader spectrum of educational personnel. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that 34 percent of these clients said that they had only read the information compared with 17 percent in St. Croix.

Still, it must be borne in mind that the great majority of clients in both islands had "used" the information in some way, if only for enlightenment. Only 7 percent of the clients in all islands said that they "have not been able to use it at all." Further,

TABLE 14

Specific Uses of the Information Reported by Clients in 1978-79 and 1982-83

	1978-1979	1982-1983
The information helped me to keep aware of developments and activities in education	65%	57%
Was able to provide the information to others who needed it	53	41
Have been able to read it, but have not been able to actually put it into practice	40	27
The information gave me a better understanding of my work or my professional relationships	34	31
Have been able to use the information to develop a plan to improve existing programs or practices	33	38
Have been able to use the information to modify or alter an existing plan for improving programs or practices	31	30
Have been able to use the information to make minor improvement in a program or practice	28	34
Have been able to use the information to justify existing programs or practices	28	34
The information helped me to conduct research or evaluation	18	30
The information caused me or others in my organization to reconsider a plan of action that was underway	17	10
Have been able to use the information to actually initiate a new program or practice	16	12
Have been able to use the information to write a position paper or other paper that could be used in practice in the future	15	27
The information helped me in my own course work (e.g., in the College of the V.I.)	9	23
Have been able to use the information to make major improvements in a program or practice	6	6
Have not been able to use it at all	8	7
	(213)	(135)

34 percent said they had used it to make a "minor improvement" in an actual program or practice, and 6 percent said a "major improvement." (Four clients said both a major and minor improvement.) And 12 percent said the information had helped them to initiate a new program or practice. Over all, 42 percent of the clients gave at least one of these three responses indicating an actual change in a practice or program. (The level of this type of response was the same in both districts.) If we add to these individuals those who used the information for some type of planning, then it is clear that the great majority of clients made some use of the information.

This does not mean that the level of actual use could not be raised; and the frequency with which clients (and non-clients as well) expressed a desire for more help with implementation (see our earlier discussion) shows that there is much room for improvement in this respect, and much desire on the part of educational personnel to engage in such improvement.

It is difficult to gain a realistic picture of how information is used without reference to actual cases, however. The following responses to our free answer question give flesh to our statistics. The question was:

> If you were able to use the information in any way, please describe in as much detail as possible the actual use made of the information or assistance.

A sampling of replies follows:

> The material was used to develop a parent attitude questionnaire based on the 14th annual Gallup poll and to give background information and cite related literature in an independent study done at CVI.
>
> I made changes in the reward system of a behavior modification program that already exists. The information was shared with teachers interested in beginning a program of their own.
>
> Masters thesis for CVI on scheduling -- however, using the new plan to implement changes in our school.
>
> I used the information to improve my own understanding on how to use the computer and as such introduced a program whereby I have exposed my students both at the Junior High School and at the College of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix campus where I am a tutor.
>
> In classroom teaching, I am now more aware of possible reasons for the many difficulties my students face in trying to solve word problems (in mathematics).

(1) Development and implementation of after school agr. program was made possible via use of material.
(2) Info made available to teacher doing research paper.
(3) Info used in Alt. Ed. Resource Center and is available to all community program serving youths.

Assisted me in formulating strategies for an alternative education proposal.

Used to decide value of tests to be used in V.I. for all students. (Hopefully)

Recommendations on Special Ed. service here PL-94-142
" " rights of parents (at PTA) " "
Treatment of behavior problems in classrooms
Understanding of drug treatment of hyperkinetician.
Explanation of test validity to staff and committees.

The information was used to support this individual's position on techniques to alleviate students' misconduct in the classroom.

We changed the scheduling of classes for the lunch program. This enabled us to have a smoother running program with more time for the students to eat.

I was not really able to use this particular item in my job, but became more aware of related fields of work. It was more of a personal benefit than anything else.

The articles were shared with professionals and other adults in direct contact with deaf persons.

I read all the material and used it to prepare myself for a lecture in 6th grades about "Marijuana and Drug Abuse."

It is helping me compare our world history course and what is taught to some on contemporary issues and area studies. It also gave me an idea of how to go about teaching the U.N.

Used the information, gotten from the articles, to try and help a 6 year old child deal with his first experience where someone close to him had died.

A search of research literature must be made prior to writing a proposal. The local libraries are [?] , but one needs to examine a broader range of literature than provided, to actually select out the more appropriate materials.

These responses illuminate the various items in our check list of uses, including planning, course work, classroom practices, initiating a program, legitimation, keeping aware, and providing the information for others.

As noted earlier, many more persons received information than were covered in our surveys. It is impossible at present to say how many of these secondary clients used it in some fashion. In any event, it is clear that the effects or impact of the service extended to many more individuals than we are able to identify.

Long distance versus local retrieval

We mentioned at the beginning of this report that a data bank comprising materials previously sent by SMERC and other locally available information has been compiled in the one of the districts. About one-fourth of the clients in this district were served by retrieval of materials from this local file in the past school year. Thus, it becomes important to determine whether the clients served in this manner were at least as satisfied with the information and at least as likely to put it to practical use as those served by the retrieval agency in the states. Clearly, local retrieval is less expensive; thus, attaining even the same level of impact would make this practice more cost effective.

The first question concerns the clients' evaluation of the information itself. Table 15 shows the proportions of clients served by the two methods who favorably evaluated the information according to several features. And it is clear that those served by local retrieval were no less favorably inclined than those served by a SMERC search. In one instance ("easily understood") the clients who were served locally were more likely to be satisfied with the information. The other differences, given the small size of the locally served clientele who replied to these items, are insignificant. In short, it appears that the value of the information is not jeopardized by local retrieval.

When we turn to the question of practical usefulness of the information, we find a similar situation: locally served clients were no less likely to say that the materials had been "very useful," and were perhaps even slightly more likely to reply in this fashion. And when we look at responses to the check-list of specific uses, we find that locally served clients were no more likely to say "have not been able to use it" or "have been able to read it, but have not been able to actually put it into practice." The data are shown in Table 16.

Finally, it is worth noting that clients who were locally served were no less likely to request the library to contact them in the near future "for assistance in acquiring information on a particular topic or problem related to [their] work." But then, they were no more likely to do so either.

TABLE 15

Clients' Evaluations of Information, According to Whether They Were Served Locally or Through SMERC

	% highly favorable *	
	Served locally	Through SMERC
Easily understood, no difficulty with language or ideas	94% (16)	75% (48)
Very comprehensive in coverage	57% (16)	52% (48)
Highly relevant to my need or request	62% (16)	51% (49)
Provided guidance for implementation or use	57% (16)	47% (48)
Would be easy to implement or use in my school or agency	44% (16)	49% (48)
Could be used or applied without additional information or help	56% (16)	58% (48)
Very new to me, quite enlightening	19% (16)	29% (47)

* Checked 1,2 on a scale 1-7.

TABLE 16

Clients' Evaluation of Usefulness and Specific Uses, According to Whether They Were Served Locally or Through SMERC

	Served locally	Through SMERC
Practical value of information: "very useful"	78% (14)	62% (45)
Regarding specific uses:		
Not been able to use it	6% (17)	11% (45)
Read it only	29% (17)	36% (45)

Apparently, the main benefits of local retrieval are economy and speedier service. (The latter benefit was referred to earlier in the discussion of clients' satisfaction with turnaround time.) These are not minor benefits. Thus, the project should try to expand this service.

Concluding Remarks

In the estimation of its clientele, VIEDS has shown remarkable improvement over the five years of its operation. Annually more than half of all educational personnel benefit from its services, either directly or indirectly (that is, as primary or secondary clients). And the great majority of clients report some actual use of the materials that they receive. Finally, the linkers provide a variety of services beyond the mere dispensation of information, and their former clients seem to have increased their capacity for knowledge utilization on their own. The only problem seems to be a reduction of service (at least with respect to personal assistance) in St. Croix. Since Crucian clients are as desirous of additional help with implementation as St. Thomian clients, this reduction means that clients' needs in that district are not being fully met.

The different styles of the two linkers suggests a divergence between focussing on planning and administration, on the one hand, and day to day classroom practices, on the other. The latter style is more comprehensive and flexible in the services offered, with equal attention to awareness raising, problem clarification, information provision, and help with implementation at all levels concerning day to day practice. The former concentrates on serving the self-defined, long range needs of higher level personnel who require fewer services from the linker. Neither style is superior to the other under all circumstances, of course; and yet it is possible that individual linkers tend to specialize in one or the other. For convenience, the two styles may be referred to as idiographic and nomothetic.

Whether these styles are dictated by temperament, occupational background, or situational constraints (or a combination thereof), the nomothetic-ideographic dimension is one that has not received attention in the literature. A tendency of linkers to assume one or the other style was alluded to in the study of the Pilot State Evaluation Project (The Use of Educational Knowledge, Sieber, Louis, and Metzger, U.S.O.E.-N.I.E, 1972), but its significance was not elaborated. Two major reviews of linkers' roles also give the dimension little or no attention (Crandall, "Training and Supporting Linking Agents," in Nash and Culbertson, Linking Processes in Educational Improvement, UCEA, 1977; Louis, "External Agents and Knowledge Utilization: Dimensions for Analysis and Action," in Lehming and Kane, Improving Schools — Using What We Know, Sage, 1981.) Clearly, the

dimension cuts across all the other dimensions described in the literature, such as internal vs external, generalist vs specialist, technical assister vs information provider, high vs low intensity, and so forth, although empirically there might be some association between the idiographic-nomothetic dimension and some of the others. In fact, the selection of a style according to these other dimensions might hinge to some extent on one's idiographic-nomothetic tendencies. The hypothesis seems worth pursuing in future research on linkers.

APPENDIX

Client and Non-client Questionnaires

1. Information about educational practices or ideas comes from many sources, including journals, books, personnel in your school or district, workshops, curriculum guides, etc.

   a. During this school year (1982 - 83), how adequate was the availability of

	Information (check one)	Personal assistance (check one)
Very adequate	____	____
Adequate	____	____
Inadequate	____	____
Very inadequate	____	____
Had none this year	____	____

   b. In general, how would you rate the usefulness of the information and personal assistance that you acquired in this school year?

	Information (check one)	Personal assistance (check one)
Very adequate	____	____
Adequate	____	____
Inadequate	____	____
Very inadequate	____	____
Had none last year	____	____

2. Do you recall receiving the information that was mentioned on the first page of this questionnaire?

   _____Yes _____No

   IF NO: Do not fill out the remainder of this questionnaire, but please return it to us in the enclosed envelope. Thank you very much.

3. Was this information requested primarily for your use or for someone else's use?

   Own use _____ Someone else's use _____

   IF FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S USE: For whom was it requested?

Name	School or Office
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

   (Thank you. Do not fill out the rest of this questionnaire, but please send it to us in the enclosed envelope.)

4. With regard to your needs, was the amount of time that it took to receive the information:

   _____Too long _____A reasonable length of time _____Sooner than expected

5. Please rate the individual who acquired the information for you on the following items (see first page of this questionnaire for the person's name):

   (Check one on each scale)

	Excellent			Fair		Poor	Did not occur	Don't recall
Initial understanding of your problem or need	____	____	____	____	____		____	____
Helpfulness in interpreting the materials or information received	____	____	____	____	____		____	____
Helpfulness in using the information	____	____	____	____	____		____	____
Availability when needed	____	____	____	____	____		____	____

9. If you received microfiche (micro-printed film in card form), did you have access to a machine for reading it?

_____Yes _____No _____ Did not receive microfiche

IF YES: Did you actually read any of it? _____Yes _____No

10. How about the practical value of the information as a whole (abstracts, articles, packages, microfiche, etc.)? (Check One)

_____Very Useful _____Moderately useful
_____Only slightly useful _____Not useful

11. Please indicate the responses below that most accurately describe the degree to which you have actually been able to use the information or materials that you received: (Please check all items that apply.)

_____ Have not been able to use it at all

_____ Have been able to read it, but have not been able to actually put it into practice

_____ Have been able to use the information to write a position paper or other paper that could be used in practice in the future

_____ Have been able to use the information to develop a plan to improve existing programs or practices

_____ Have been able to use the information to modify or alter an existing plan for improving programs or practices

_____ Have been able to use the information to justify existing programs or practices

_____ The information caused me or others in my organization to reconsider a plan of action that was underway

_____ Have been able to use the information to actually initiate a new program or practice

_____ Have been able to use the information to make minor improvements in a program or practice

_____ Have been able to use the information to make major improvements in a program or practice

_____ The information helped me to keep aware of developments and activities in education

_____ Was able to provide the information to others who needed it

_____ The information gave me a better understanding of my work or my professional relationships

_____ The information helped me to conduct research or evaluation

_____ The information helped me in my own course work (e.g., in the V.I. College, U. of Phoenix)

_____ Other (please specify):

NON-CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

C

VIRGIN ISLANDS EDUCATIONAL DISSEMINATION SYSTEM

Department of Education
Box 6640
St. Thomas
U.S. Virgin Islands 00801
(809) 774-4319 or 774-8315

Department of Education
Box "I"
Christiansted, St. Croix
U.S. Virgin Islands 00820
(809) 773-6495 or 773-1095

Dear

Would you please help us to determine the needs of Department of Education personnel for information about new practices and ideas?

We ask only that you fill out the enclosed one page questionnaire and return it to us in the self-addressed envelope. Your identity will be kept absolutely confidential.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Cordially,

James M. Oliver

James M. Oliver
Project Director

1. Information about educational practices or ideas comes from many sources, including journals, books, personnel in your school or district, workshops, curriculum guides, etc.

a. During this school year (1982-83), how adequate was the availability of

	Information (check one)	Personal Assistance (check one)
Very adequate	_____	_____
Adequate	_____	_____
Inadequate	_____	_____
Very inadequate	_____	_____
Had none this year	_____	_____

b. In general, how would you rate the usefulness of the information and personal assistance that you acquired in this school year?

	Information (check one)	Personal Assistance (check one)
Very adequate	_____	_____
Adequate	_____	_____
Inadequate	_____	_____
Very inadequate	_____	_____
Had none this year	_____	_____

2. In general, do you feel that you need more personal help in implementing new ideas or practices in your work, less help, or about the same amount of help as you have been receiving?

More help _____ Less help _____ About the same _____

3. To the best of your knowledge, has any information you received this year been supplied by our service (Beverly Nieves, St. Thomas; Patricia Murphy, St. Croix) either directly or indirectly through someone not working for the service?

Yes, directly ____ Yes, indirectly ____ No ____ Not sure ____

4. Would you like to be contacted by us in the near future for assistance in acquiring information on a particular topic or problem related to your work?

Yes _____ No _____

5. How often are you asked for your opinion or advice by educational personnel about an educational issue? (Please check one)

Very often _____ Fairly often _____ Sometimes _____ Rarely _____

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any questions or further comments, you may call us at: 774-8315

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